

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

MAGAZINE



No. 11

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THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

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Front cover: Q83, T31, RF486, 672 and 534 are seen at the old bus station during the highly successful Kingston Operating Day. RF owners are hoping to organise a similar event in conjunction with one of our Display Days during 1996. (Photo: Colin Shepperd)

EDITORIAL

I don't think there can be anyone within the bus preservation movement that hasn't been aware of the huge amount of progress made at Cobham during 1995. Even our most sceptical of onlookers are one by one acknowledging the fact that the Trust is back on the right track and heading one way only. Upwards! For those of us who have been involved at the thick end, 1996 should be a very rewarding year. Let us hope that the Trust can at long last be re-united with its rightful assets in the very near future as has been indicated in black and white by the other camp. Only then can we really move full steam ahead.

The big news for 1996 is of course the new Open Day venue on the former runway at Brooklands. Full details will be announced in due course but rest assured that a team is already hard at work to ensure that it is our most successful one yet. But please, if you want to help on the day do be sure to contact John Rawlins as soon as possible.

As those in attendance will know, our last Display Day, in conjunction with Kingston Operating Day, was a huge success with the RF boys really doing Cobham proud. A professional video crew was hired to record the event and the finished product will be released on Open Day. The rumour is that a certain editor is to be involved in the narration and having seen a very rough advance copy I have high hopes that this is going to be a big seller and the first in what should become a series of Cobham related videos. I was going to include a report on the event in this issue but it will now appear in the Open Day programme which John Bedford and myself are already working on with those nice people at Ian Allan Publishing. "Buses" and "Classic Bus" are once again sponsoring the event and as ever, their input will be invaluable.

Elsewhere, work is progressing with P3 which really is proving popular with members. The original aim was to get the coach through its MOT fairly quickly but it is now undergoing some serious panel work so may well be largely restored by the time it enters service, hopefully in the Spring.

Several of the fleet have been active during the Autumn with TD95 picking up another trophy at Reading in November thanks to a polish on the day by Hugh Harland. Hugh tells me that "Swifty" is now fit and well again after its various mishaps and if my calculations are correct it should just qualify for a free tax disc following the revised rules announced in the Budget. Now there's no excuse not to use your bus in the winter.

In what is another packed issue of the magazine, Alan Bond moves from Bristols onto the subject of LeyNats, which it seems people either love or hate. Like Alan and several other members, I have something of a soft spot for these much maligned machines which we take so for granted due to their ubiquity. In original form their days are surely numbered and as such I predict that preservationists will start snapping them up in much the same way that Bristol REs have been. I for one will miss the LeyNats distinctive death rattle when they do go for they have been just as much a part of my local scene as the RFs were two decades ago. Whatever your thoughts on the subject I believe that the National will come to be regarded as the last proper single decker and as such I hope we one day secure one for Cobham. Anyone know the whereabouts of LS1-6?

Changing the subject, a recent clearout of the storeroom next to the canteen revealed a pile of old newsletters dating back to the late Sixties and early Seventies. In amongst them was a list compiled by the late Alan Allmey of stock held by what was then the LBPG. It makes interesting reading, not least because certain individuals are currently claiming some such items to be their own property. Well, now we know the truth so we also know who isn't telling the truth (not that we didn't know already!). However, there are a lot of unidentifiable items dotted around the museum so might I suggest that the relevant members inform the Chairman of exactly what belongs to whom by the end of January. Anything not identified by that date can then safely be assumed to be part of the Trust's collection. You have been warned.

Before I sign off, we desperately need some traffic cones for future

Display Days so if you know of any stray ones which need a good home please bring them down. It is hoped that a Slide and Social evening can be arranged during February and members will be informed in due course. Which leaves me to wish everyone compliments of season. I should like to extend special thanks to those who have contributed to this publication during the year (keep it coming) and indeed those who have helped make 1995 such a successful year for Cobham. But most of all, I should like to extend my thanks and appreciation to our quite exceptional Chairman who continues to put 110% into the cause and never ceases to amaze me with his energy and dedication. You are an example to us all Peter. Long may you continue.

Mike Nash

VEHICLE EXCISE DUTY

In his November Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the good news that vehicles over 25 years of age in the former Private/Light Goods (PLG) taxation class would, with immediate effect, be exempt from Vehicle Excise Duty.

At first it appeared that this was only applicable to vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes but the 3.5 tonne rule applies to goods vehicles only so Class 5 buses of any weight are now tax exempt if they are over 25 years old which is good news to most of us and perhaps more of a vote winner than reducing the rate of income tax when you consider how many preservationists are out there! Even more surprising, those owners with eligible vehicles that are currently taxed will be refunded for the unexpired period. Many bus owners only tax their vehicles for the rally season but now most will no doubt keep their vehicles permanently taxed which should greatly boost attendances to winter events such as the Christmas Lights Tour.

When taxing your vehicle for the first time using the "25 Year Exempt" rule you have to do so at your Local Vehicle Licensing office (LVO), presenting in the normal manner your registration document,

insurance certificate, MOT certificate and V10 form. The former will be retained by the DVLC who will send a new one back a few weeks later with the revised taxation class upon it. It is therefore a good opportunity to get any incorrect details on your registration document altered. For instance, like most RFs, 534's document describes it as a Leyland AEC. Theoretically, if the DVLC read my notes on the reverse, the new one should come back stating AEC Regal IV. Time will tell. In the meantime, thanks Mr. Clarke for my shiny tax disc. It's just a pity you put up the price of diesel!

MN

REDHILL ROAD UPDATE

The Redhill Road Rangers, ably led by our own Robert Vince, continue to put an extraordinary amount of effort into ensuring that the road remains closed at its entrance from the A3. However, it has recently been a case of one step forward, two backwards as first, an Elmbridge Borough Council sub-committee which voted to keep the road closed had its decision deferred by a troublesome minority who insisted the issue go to full council. Soon after, Guildford Borough Council (whose boundary crosses the top of the road) voted overwhelmingly to keep it closed. More recently, at Elmbridges' full council meeting, the members voted to recommend that the road be re-opened subject to necessary safety improvements, a ludicrous decision given that those alterations amount to some three quarters of a million pounds, which would wipe out that council's annual road improvements budget.

So the saga rages on and it seems likely that, for the time being a further 'temporary closure order' will be issued whilst the Department of Transport make their final decision. This may hinge on whether or not the suggestion for construction of a 'jet' lane from the M25 to the A3 is adopted which would cut straight across the path of the present slip road into Redhill Road rendering access impossible. More news next issue.

MN

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the London Bus Preservation Group Ltd (the holding company) took place on 29 August 1995. The three directors, A B Cross, A Peters and J J Bowden, proposed motions which were subsequently approved. They were (abbreviated):

- i. To change the name of the company to The London Bus Preservation Trust Ltd.
- ii. Adopt the new Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company.
- iii. Apply to the Charity Commissioners for charity status.
- iv. Complete Charity Commission form RE1, pursuant to the previous paragraph.

Although this EGM took place in August, the Trust committee was shocked to discover in early November that the change of name still had not been registered at Companies' House. However, Companies' House did eventually record the change on 17 November. At the time of writing, the Trust solicitor, David Morgan, is waiting to receive a timetable for the amalgamation of the two existing organisations. This will of course include an agreement for the setting up of democratic elections for seats on the new Council of Management.

Kingston Operating Day. Our last running day for this year on 22 October – linked with the closure of the old Kingston bus station – was a great success and the twilight running of buses proved very popular. A video will be available shortly, possibly for release on the Open Day in April 1996.

Progress on Trust vehicles has been steady, although time has been lost through sickness in the volunteer force this quarter. The longer hours of work expected in the normal employment of some volunteers have also taken its toll.

Finally, I would like to wish all members a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year, and pay a special thank you to our volunteers for their valued and continued support.

Peter Plummer

1996 OPEN DAY

Thank you to all those who have responded to my appeal which accompanied the last Magazine. If you have not heard anything yet you have not been forgotten. The project leaders will communicate with you once we have the full, or our best can do, staffing levels and it is on that point that I would like to issue a reminder to the first appeal (on the orange sheet).

If you are still thinking about volunteering please do not delay, we still need people for most of the teams especially those where more general skills are required eg. Trust Shops, Catering. Remember, this is our big day and it is only we, the members, who can make it work. Looking forward to hearing from you.

John Rawlins (Volunteer Coordinator 1996 Open Day)

OPEN DAY UPDATE . . .

So far so good, but there is still plenty of organising to do before next April. Next year we move from Apps Court to Brooklands Runway (adjacent to our friends at Brooklands Museum) which is much closer to Cobham. Much more room and – in addition to the usual offerings – much more for the family and friends including a steam train, other modes of transport, craft stalls and kiddies attractions.

All this will be at the same price as last year with a special offer for members (a 20% discount against the entry price on production of a valid membership card), and something different for those that are helping on the day (all helpers will of course have free entry on the day and, in addition, they should have at least half the day free to enjoy themselves).

One thing will be missing though – the queues for the buses are a thing of the past. Much thought and effort has already gone into this aspect of Open Day and we are determined to avoid any problems with the buses next year.

We shall again have the benefit of support from Ian Allan and

Classic Bus, and a number of members have offered to "have a go" in response to John Rawlings' request in the last magazine. We are however looking to double our helpers next year from 50 to 100 and John is still looking for extra volunteers (see elsewhere in this magazine). Please do not be shy. Apart from your bodies we also want the following:

- To borrow a generator on the day.
- To borrow a caravan/camper/tent on the day.
- To borrow as many walkie-talkies as we can.
- To borrow some cold boxes to put drinks in (boxes will not be returned empty at the end of the day).

Next year's event will be the biggest and best ever – but only with your help. Please join in with the organising (and the post-event party). If you cannot commit yourself in this way why not ask a friend to help instead but do make sure you come on the day. Thank you.

Roger West

PS If all this overwhelms you we shall be having three Display Days in 1996 which are just as much fun but not quite so hectic. Interested? Contact Roger West or John Rawlings.

FIREWORKS

Saturday 4th November

The traditional gathering for fireworks and supper took place at Cobham on 4th November. Disappointingly, numbers were down compared with previous years, nevertheless a good time was had by all. In particular, our grateful thanks to Pam Johnson, who took over the catering at short notice and looked after us. Well done Pam, I am sure your talents will be put to good use again in the near future.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Another healthy influx of new members has seen further growth and at December 1st we had reached yet another new high of 368, with more than one-third using the Deed of Covenant/Standing Order payment method.

There are many members whose renewals fall due with this issue, all of whom will have found the necessary form enclosed. Please help the Trust by returning these AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, with either your remittance or request for DOC/SO forms. We do hope that you decide to stay with the Trust for 1996, which undoubtedly be an even more successful year for Cobham, not least due to our new and exciting venue for Open Day. A warm welcome is extended to the following:

108	Ian Lowings	Bagshot	RM108/408/597	PM
378	D Bates	Reading		DD
379	John Bennett	Hanwell		DD
380	J Cox	Bromley		DD
381	Mark Dexter	Bromley		DD
382	Mrs L Golden	Thames Ditton		DD
383	David Hill	Addlestone		DD
384	Tony Read	Whetstone		DD
385	Robin Sharp	Croydon	RF?/GS?	DD
386	Vivian Davies	Fleet		DD
387	John Jones	Shepperton		DD
388	Derek Funnell	Hayes	RT?	
389	David Smalley	Swanage		PP
390	David Thomas	Ashford		MN
391	Mrs Leah Burrows	Beckenham		DD
392	D Ehlert	Selsdon		DD
393	David Stark	Bracknell		DD
394	Dave Menzies	Kempston		DD
395	A Larcombe	Purley		
396	Andy Potten	Vigo, Meopham		
397	Robert Thomas	Glasgow		
398	Mrs Diana Morris	Chessington		PM
399	Mrs Linda Blackburn	Newton Abbot		BB
400	Mike Fuller	Bedford		DD
401	Malcolm Gilden	Oldham		DD
402	John Greenwood	West Molesey		DD
403	P James	Twickenham		DD

404	Mrs P Lee	Kingston-upon-Thames	DD
405	Tim Monks	Chiswick	DD
406	Chris Plested	Guildford	DD
407	Raymond Stanley	Twickenham	DD
408	Paul Wheeler	Isle of Wight	DD
409	R Wood	Portsmouth SM502	DD
410	David Lattimore	Maulden PD2/Leopard	DJ
411	G Edwards	Fetcham	DD
412	Paul Herting	Chorleywood	JH
413	Roger Eekhout	Belgium RM859	JB
414	Richard Hussey	Morden	PM
415	Peter Wake	Woking	PM
416	David Wilkinson	Staines RM548	PP
417	Peter Monteath	Croydon	JD
418	Peter Simmonds	Morden RM642/DMS132	
419	C Borg	Putney	MN
420	Martin Leacock	Croydon	MN
421	Geoff Hudspith	Luton	DJ
422	Graham Smith	Eastcote	
423	Allen Trenchard	Dorking	
424	R Thompson	Ripley	
425	Ken Tarbox	Hungerford	MN

Recruited by BB–Brian Blackburn; DD–Display Day; DJ–Dave Johnson; JB–John Bedford; JD–John Davies; JH–John Herting; MN–Mike Nash; PM–Paul Morris; PP–Peter Plummer

SO WHO CAN DRIVE WHAT – UPDATE

Some gremlins crept into the last issue with the result that a couple of the details in the chart were incorrect. Firstly, those who drive with 'Grandfathers Rights' are NOT permitted to operate on a hire and reward basis and secondly, HGV licence holders who are over 21 may drive buses of any age but they are restricted to carrying 8 passengers.

My thanks to Mike Beeby of Carltonbus for spotting the errors. May I remind members that Mike runs an excellent insurance scheme for bus owners and is well worth contacting for a quote (01933 769).

MN

REVIEWS BOOKS

TRAMS IN THE NORTH WEST by Peter Hesketh (Ian Allan Ltd.)

A brief history of each of the tramway systems of Cumberland (as it was then) and North Lancashire, including maps, fleet lists and many excellent photographs showing not only the trams themselves, from horse cars through steam trams and all types of electric cars to modern streamliners, but also street scenes of a long bygone age.

For tram fans seeking information on systems in the north west of England, or for anyone just wishing to indulge in a large helping of nostalgia, this is an excellent publication, and good value at £12.99.

Could this be the first of a new series? If so, I for one am already looking forward eagerly to the next.

Brian Downe

DENNIS – 100 YEARS OF INNOVATION

If you want a good outline history of the Dennis organisation then this is the book for you. There are many excellent photographs, both colour and black and white, and the text is interesting and informative without being too technical. There is a useful list of Dennis model names at the back of the book and this goes a long way towards sorting out information for photo captions and other historical titbits. I am not so sure about the list of present day operators as lists like this are usually out of date overnight though it does show how there is currently a broad spectrum of enthusiasm for the products of Guildford. Having personal experience of both the Javelin and the modern Dart I find the former a more refined vehicle than the latter but that is only to be expected bearing in mind the purposes for which each is designed. Certainly it is too soon to tell if the modern generation of Dennis's will live up to the reputation of their predecessors. One niggly thing about this

book is the way that only about 70% of each page is used for text, leaving a margin of about 1½ inches at the inner edge, though, to be fair, this margin is ignored as far as the illustrations are concerned so nothing is lost in this respect. All in all this book is well up to the usual Ian Allan standard and must be considered good value at £14.99. If you are a Dennis fan you will be desirous of owning a copy for your bookshelf so tell the wife/girlfriend/mother/father/sister or anybody else who buys you presents that Christmas is coming. As a last resort, and if all else fails, buy it yourself, you won't be disappointed.

Alan Bond

VIDEO

The Story of the RT, Castle Video CVi 1909,
Colour and B/W, running time 60 minutes,
available exclusively through larger branches of W H Smith at £10.99.

Just as you do when selecting a book you start by reading the cover notes, then when you have read the book or watched the video you sometimes wonder if the cover notes might have got mixed up at the publishers, In this case the cover notes read "Featuring the country's top experts and authors, and illustrated with unique archive footage, this video tells the fascinating story of the RT – London's Classic Bus". Nothing too contentious there – unless you happen to be someone with an RM fetish. Some 60 minutes later, amongst the final dialogue you will hear London Transport's Mr Norman Cohen say "The RT encapsulates the best of design, it was 'fit for the purpose' – it absolutely epitomises it, it was right for the streets of London, it was right for the passengers, it was right for the staff".

Between those two points you are shown how the story of the RT can be traced back to the early 1900s with footage of the B types with policemen riding next to the drivers. (Does this imply that the RT was made a half cab to stop the 'Old Bill' from getting free rides or were there that many accidents in those days it was best to carry a reliable

witness).

With archive footage in abundance you are given a thorough insight into why and how the RT evolved and will have been taken through the 60s and 70s with excellent service footage.

There is an old Red Indian saying which states "it is a brave man who wears a white cap under an old bus" but when that old bus is a member of the Cobham Museum and a certain Chairman is showing us where all is placed on the underside, (although I did have trouble grasping the fact that the gearbox was 'amidships' despite being told twice, – just joking Peter) then you know how much care and attention goes into bus preservation and how well the underside of an RT can be preserved. From this sequence we pass through more delectable archive footage until we see those vehicles still in service in various parts of the world, from Guernsey to Southern California (although with engine and gearbox changes and horrible looking indicators and a top speed of 65 mph are they still RTs?), going topless in South Africa and popping down under to Western Australia (and here is my one very, very small criticism, was this sequence shot on a palm camcorder, the quality is not quite the same).

And so we go back to the cover notes. Yes, this video features some of the top known names and authors. Yes, it features excellent archive footage. Yes, it tells a fascinating story about the RT. Yes, it does it in a way that is interesting with good quality production and film editing, and yes, it shows the RT to be a very important part of London's transport history.

If ever £10.99 was to be well spent, this is the occasion, either go out and buy it yourself or put it on top of your Christmas list, even if you do regard the RM as the Classic London Bus. One final word of warning, it takes some finding in Smith's, they appear to stock only one copy at a time, usually hidden in the General Interest section.

Mike Clarke

RALLY REPORT

Dean Forest Railway, 13th October

On Sunday 13th October, The Dean Forest Railway Society, at Lydney in Gloucester held their yearly Transport Extravaganza. This year however, it was a bit special as it was their Silver Jubilee Year. It was to be attended by Martin Gibbons and other members in TD95, along with myself and my wife in RTW29, (a formidable pair of London Leylands, if I might make so bold). As it was a special rally, I decided to do something that I rarely do nowadays, and bull RTW29 up for a serious crack at giving TD95 and the other entrants a run for their money in the concours, although in my heart of hearts I expected to be put in my place by Cobham's Flagship.

In the event, as you may know, TD95 was unfortunately unable to make the long journey to the West Country on this occasion. However Martin did attend, with his own ex-Grey Cars coach, and did a wonderful job for the Railway Society on the free shuttle service into town. This left RTW29 to do battle with the excellent entry of many buses and coaches, including Tony Peart's superb Yorkshire Pullman AEC Regent III which was after a hat trick, having travelled down from the north to win the trophy for the last two years. I am happy to report that RTW29 managed to edge the Regent into second place, and was awarded the Forest Shield for the best bus or coach present.

As people who know me are aware, I do not often make very much effort to attempt to win prizes, (being 'A' basically lazy, and 'B' not a very great supporter of the Pot Hunting circle), but on this occasion I was proud to collect the trophy on behalf of the Cobham membership. Honours however must be duly given to the following: Leyland Motors of Britain, for producing a vehicle that can still carry its head high at 46 years old; Alan Hallpike, for the superb restoration of RTW29 some 20 years ago; and last, but by no means least, my wife Joan, not exactly the greatest enthusiast of old buses, for her excellent job of making every inch of the Leyland's interior appear as though it had only left the coachbuilders the day before the rally.

The weather on the day did not turn out too badly, and the public turned up in their hundreds. Let's hope that perhaps next year TD95 will be able to make the journey, as I know that the dozens of enthusiasts who regularly attend this rally, would love to see Cobham Bus Museum's Flagship.

Roy Adams

VIC'S CHRISTMAS QUIZ

For lovers of old LT vehicles

Compiled by Vic (RF41) Chivers, here's your chance to win a selection of goodies from the Cobham shop. Answers to the Editor by the end of January, please. Good luck!

- 1 Did LT ever operate green 2RT2s in service?
- 2 Which vehicle carries registration number ELP228?
- 3 Name two types of old LT buses where you stop the engine from the steering column?
- 4 Which class of vehicle replaced the RMC?
- 5 Name three types of ticket machine which LT has used.
- 6 What is the latest vehicle to join the Cobham collection?
- 7 Where was all lost property sent to?
- 8 Which Cobham bus worked on route 100 two decades ago?
- 9 Which manufacturer built the most buses between 1930 and 1950?
- 10 Which task did 702B perform when in LT service?
- 11 Which vehicle does Cobham's magazine editor own?
- 12 Did RMs ever operate on Enfield's route 107?
- 13 How many garage codes can you get from within HERTFORD?
- 14 Name four preserved buses which represent the first of their class?
- 15 Which was the only RT to carry routeboards?

THE LEYLAND NATIONAL

Alan Bond

Love it or hate it, the one thing you can't do with the Leyland National is ignore it. For twenty-five years it has been prominent on the streets throughout the length and breadth of the country, propping up ailing and prosperous bus services alike and getting very little in the way of thanks or care along the way.

My first contact with the National was in 1973 when our first batch was delivered to Maidenhead. In total, our allocation of new vehicles ran to 21 buses ranging from L to P registrations and they gradually replaced a motley collection of Bristol LSs, MWs and LHs. With the passage of time further Nationals arrived from other depots of the company and our allocation peaked at, as far as I can recall, 39 vehicles having eventually replaced the ubiquitous RE.

The first thing that struck me about the National was the high standard of ride achieved on the appalling Berkshire roads (no improvement there in twenty five years). This could only have been attributed to the air suspension and was very much a point in their favour. Not quite so pleasant was the tendency for the earlier examples to roll to an alarming degree on corners. With leathercloth seats as standard the angle of tilt was sufficient to dump passengers on the floor if they were sitting on the longitudinal seat behind the cab and the only solution to this problem was to keep the speed down on roundabouts.

Probably the best feature of the National was the power steering which really was finger-light. This can be taken to mean just what it says, for it was possible to insert an index finger behind a steering wheel spoke and turn the wheel with consummate ease. The steering was also very positive and it was possible to place the bus within a sixteenth of an inch if you had need to do so. The gear change was, for me, at long last in the right place ie out of the way and on the right. This feature also impressed a couple of retired local drivers, one of whom said to me 'I see they've moved the gear change back to where it

should be at last'. Obviously his memories of service buses go back much further than mine. The gear change itself was positive, the engine responsive and, all in all, you felt part of the bus and you could play with the schedules all day long and finish your duty feeling as fresh as a daisy.

Before long our first faults manifested themselves. First of all we had a serious drop in brake efficiency and stopping became a problem for a while until it was discovered that a lot of the time the front brakes were not doing anything, so some remedial work was put in hand and the usual level of braking was restored, only now we had a little too much braking but not enough grip, and skidding was the order of the day to the extent that you were not sure of a stop in the wet even under mild braking. Further modification to the brake valves to alter the balancing restored the status quo and we could breathe again when the sky got dark. After this we settled down and received a pleasant surprise when we started to receive newer vehicles which were fitted with anti roll bars to steady the cornering antics. These contained Metalastik bushes which wore out rather quickly until the anti roll bar made more noise than an RE cab partition. This problem has never been resolved. And, though bush life has been extended considerably, it is not unusual to hear a National rattling its way down the road even in the nineties. Unfortunately standards of maintenance being what they are and steadily getting worse, the power steering on most Nationals has deteriorated to the point where many are now in a dangerous condition. The usual symptoms are heavy steering that tends to lock solid at low engine revs and a loud grinding from the power steering pump. This howling noise is quite distinctive and can be heard daily across the length and breadth of the country where there are Nationals present. The solutions are simple but seldom applied for considerations of cost. The annoying thing about this little terror is that it is often allied to faulty tracking and the steering becomes a nightmare to handle and every shift becomes a battle between bus and driver with the driver usually the loser. At the very least it should be a legal requirement that the vehicle examiner should

road test the vehicle before issuing a pass certificate and then perhaps we would see a little less of this nonsense.

In all I suppose we had about four or five really good years with Leyland Nationals before the inevitable deterioration set in. The first signs of this were apparent when vehicles started to arrive back after overhaul fresh and resplendent in a new coat of paint. They looked great until you got into the cab and began driving and then the shortcomings of the Tilling style overhaul system became obvious. Worn parts were replaced on an as necessary basis which meant that new and worn parts went back into service side by side and this altered the characteristics of various components such as power steering and suspension which developed faults which were unheard of when the vehicles were new. A new king pin on one side only meant that the worn one took more than its fair share of the strain and the standard of ride suffered as the bus rattled and shook its way down the road. This phenomenon then affected the bodywork and we started to get the all too familiar breakages of the front body hoop corners and as a consequence of this we were treated to a vision of a front end that wobbled like a jelly and in one instance a windscreen actually fell out while the bus was in motion. The problem was recognised by the manufacturers and a modification in the form of a strengthener was made available. Our company, in its infinite wisdom, decided that they would use these to repair breakages with the result that the problem persisted long after it could have been cured. Eventually the folly of their ways was realised and for the most part the jelly syndrome is now behind us.

The main problem that beset the National was the engine and this was surprising as a fixed cylinder head, one would assume, would have distinct advantages bearing in mind the working environment in which it was placed. Not having to worry about head gaskets could and should have eased the load for many a fleet engineer but it didn't quite happen like that for most of the problems were centred around the turbocharger which suffered from all sorts of problems. The difficulty with a turbocharger is that the impeller sits in the exhaust stream

where the environment is distinctly hostile and lubrication is of the utmost importance. This in turn requires careful adherence to the proper starting procedure but in the hustle and bustle of the modern bus industry this is asking too much and alas many a turbo has died on the job. This affects the performance drastically and also provides a smoke screen that your average destroyer captain would be proud of. Bearing failures were probably the most common fault with the Leyland 510 engine and big ends were run out with the frequency of hot dinners (not in our canteen though). The peculiar oil filter also gave a few problems and all in all the engineering side were glum, to say the least - later on I came across a depot engineer who had charge of three vertically mounted 510s which lived in the back of three Bristol VRs and he couldn't speak highly enough of them. One of them, I was told, had amassed nearly 600,000 miles before a spanner was even so much as waved at it and this figure is well up to Gardner standards. Proof enough, if it were needed, that laying an engine on its side is not always a good idea. Oddly enough the RF seems to be the exception to the rule here and nobody seems to be able to fathom out why. Personally I think it's because AEC were always the best of the lot, but then I'm biased.

Our next problem was the perennial one of heating. In their wisdom the designers of the National decided that the heater outlets should be at ceiling level, just above the windows. I have never fathomed out how a person who does not know that heat rises could rise to the level of designing buses for the nation. I have to say that the system worked reasonably satisfactorily during the first winter of use but thereafter the situation went from bad to worse. It takes a very good heater motor to push hot air down to floor level in sufficient quantities to maintain an even and comfortable temperature and with use those very motors soon lose their peak efficiency. This then allows more of the heat to do the natural thing and lurk at the highest possible level to avoid being trodden on. The system has never been changed and to this day during cold weather any National with the roof mounted heating system can produce a driver with sweat on his brow

and feet like blocks of ice. This very same heating system acts as the windscreen demister and on a wet day in the summer the only way to keep the screens clear is to turn on the heaters, which does not make for happy passengers. Later Nationals have a more conventional heating system and when problems arise these are predictable and can be rectified fairly easily but there has never yet been a bus suitable for OMO which has a truly satisfactory heating system. Give me a good old half-cab any time.

Nowadays Leyland Nationals are a sadly neglected bunch of buses which have seen better days and even the modest refurbishment programme carried out by my company has only served to clean up the interior, while the mechanics are allowed to deteriorate as before. Sadly none will see the proper overhaul in the Chiswick/Aldenham style that they were meant to have at regular intervals. No doubt they would have been in much better condition had they been given the care that they should have had and will now never get. Probably in the far distant future, by the time the bus industry is turned around from its current woeful state, the Leyland National will have totally expired from the institutionalised neglect of deregulation, privatisation and the bodgers charter, better, known as FFD. If ever a bus had the dice loaded against it, it has to be the Leyland National, and the fact that it survives against all the odds has to merit some kind of tribute. □



PAINTS AND VARNISHES

Sources of paint and varnish for brushing use in the restoration of London Transport Buses

SPEEDCOAT (Topcoat)

Manufactured by PPG Industries (UK) Ltd, PO Box 359, Rotton Park Street, Birmingham, B16 0AD. Telephone: 0121-455 9866.

Price: £34.49 for 2.5 litres. Huge range of listed colours, including such obscure shades as LMS Red and Walls Whippy Pink; those relevant to London Transport are listed below. Obtainable through local supplier (write for details of nearest), colours mixed on site by supplier.

Recommended supplier: RWB Motor Factors Ltd, 116 High Street, Locket Road, Wealdstone, Middx, HA3 7AL

(located behind 'After the Dinosaur' pet shop).

FLT.1123 LTE Bus Red	Exterior	FLT.3917 LTE Magnolia	RM interior
FLT.3444 LTE Dark Chocolate Brown	RT/RF interior	FLT.3994 LTE Sung Yellow	Use unknown
FLT.3445 LTE Indian Red	Wheels	FLT.4324 LTE Bitter Chocolate	Use not known
FLT.3462 LTE Interior Ivory	RT interior	FLT.4491 LTE Coffee	Use not known
FLT.3464 LTE Lincoln Green	Exterior	FLT.4531 LTE Mistletoe	Use unknown
FLT.3506 LTE Portland Stone	Use unknown	FLT.4763 LTE Metrobus Light Stone	M interior
FLT.3507 LTE Light Mist Grey	Exterior	FLT.4771 LTE Porcelain	Use unknown
FLT.3653 LTE Dark Chinese Green	Interior	FLT.5147 LTE Ticket Machine Blue	Use unknown
FLT.3654 LTE Canary Yellow	Exterior	FLT.5305 LTE Ascot Grey	Use not known
FLT.3688 LTE Brown 1946	RT/RF interior	FLT.5323 LTE 1961 Pale Green	Exterior
FLT.3692 LTE Chiswick Cream	Exterior	FLT.5725 LTE Acton Grey	Use not known
FLT.3914 LTE Brass Yellow	Use not known	FLT.6037 London Country Green	Exterior
FLT.3915 LTE Olive Green	T interior(?).	FLT.6038 London Country Grey	Exterior
	Not for Green Line		
	RF interior.		
FLT.3916 LTE Blue Grey	Use not known		

Some of those listed may, of course, be for other uses, such as Underground trains. I have a full catalogue, should any non-LT shades need identifying.

MASOPAR (TOPCOAT)

Manufactured by: Joseph Mason PLC., Nottingham Road, Derby, DE21 6AR. Telephone 01332-295959. Obtainable only direct from the manufacturers. No delivery charge. Large range of colours has been supplied to LT in the past; unfortunately colour specification is deleted from records if no purchase made in two years. Will mix paint to match old paint if sample supplied (preferred wet) but only for a minimum order of 25 litres. Only shade known to be currently listed is:

0205 W0398 LTE Bus Red (they call it 'light red')

Price: £48.20 for 2.5 litres

TEKALOID

Manufactured by: Croda Paints Ltd, Bankside, Hull, HU5 1SQ. Telephone 01482-341411 or 448158. Obtainable through local supplier (write for details of nearest), not mixed on premises – supplied from stock.

Recommended supplier: Avenue Coatings, 3 David Road, Poyle Industrial Estate, Colnbrook, SL3 0TW. Telephone 01753-686888

Other known suppliers: W S Shepherd, 280 Hertingfordbury Road, Hertford, SG14 2LG. Telephone: 01992-582126; Ludlows of Luton, Thistle Road, Windmill Trading Estate, Luton, LU1 3XJ. Telephone: 01582-29883.

TOPCOAT: Limited range of predetermined colours in 'Tekaloid Synthetic Enamel' (£39.01 for 2.5 litres) Colour chart available from manufacturer. However, some of the other products are of considerable interest.

UNDERCOAT: This chart also shows recommended shade of undercoat for various shades, which is useful. Two useful shades are:

BC19 P91 Red suits Bus Red
BC19 F92 Dark Green suits Lincoln Green

Many other undercoat shades available, price £34.36 for 2.5 litres.

TEKALOID (continued)

VARNISH

BG18 001	Pale transport varnish	£ 12.09 for 1 litre
BG18 000	Extra Pale Transport Varnish (pale indicates suitability for light colours)	£10.83 for 1 litre

THINNERS

TN07 000	Tekaloid Brushing Thinner	£4.59 for 1 litre
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Also available are various primers, but the only etch primer (for aluminium and brass) available is a two-pack primer for spraying use. (The only source of brushing etch primer I know of is from B&Q!)

STILL UNTRACED

No source has yet been found for the following shades:

RF Pale Cream RF interior
Dark Brunswick Green RT/RF leathercloth
Dark Olive Green Green line RF interior
Burgundy RM and modernised RF interior

The latter three have in the past been supplied in gloss and eggshell finish.

All prices quoted are trade prices, plus VAT, and are believed to be correct at August 1995. Most outlets supply at trade prices without question. This information sheet has been supplied to the London Bus Preservation Trust, Routemaster Owners and Operators Association and RT/RF Register for free distribution. It has been compiled from numerous sources, and the information is as accurate as possible. However, you should satisfy yourself that any paint etc purchased is suitable for the use you wish to put it to. Any additional information will be gratefully received.

This information has been collated by John Hinson, Graham Road,
Wealdstone, Mddx HA3 5RE

RAMBLING ON!

More reminiscences from Ken Duke

In my last article I tried to describe a typical bus spotting trip on a Red Rover ticket back in the fifties. A rummage through the memory scrapyard has unearthed a few more rusty recollections . . .

A Saturday outing on a red, green or twin rover ticket was the ideal way of learning to find our way around the Capital and its suburbs. How many other youngsters (apart from those living there) could boast that they not only knew where Addlestone, Dunton Green or Garston were, but had actually been there? These places had of course been visited purely owing to their claim to fame in having a Country area bus garage. Our small gang occasionally went on trips to these far-flung corners to enable us to 'do' the garage and spot whatever buses were present. We were unjustly scornful of some of the smaller country garages with few buses to cop, unless a rare service vehicle or similar prize lurked in a corner.

I remember clearly after a long wait to catch a local connection in the leafy lanes around Chesham, of suddenly becoming aware of the whine of an unfamiliar engine. A Dinky toy of a bus chugged up to the stop. It was the first GS I had seen – and how well they were suited to those winding country roads and sleepy villages!

Another occasion recalled was a trip to Watford and thence to Garston garage, a big modern building with buses in plenty. But as we began to sneak in with our notepads at the ready – panic! A large garage foreman was seen striding towards us. We gulped and began to move in reverse gear towards the entrance. Much to our relief he turned out to be a friendly soul and gave us a tour of the garage, a nice gesture which was much appreciated.

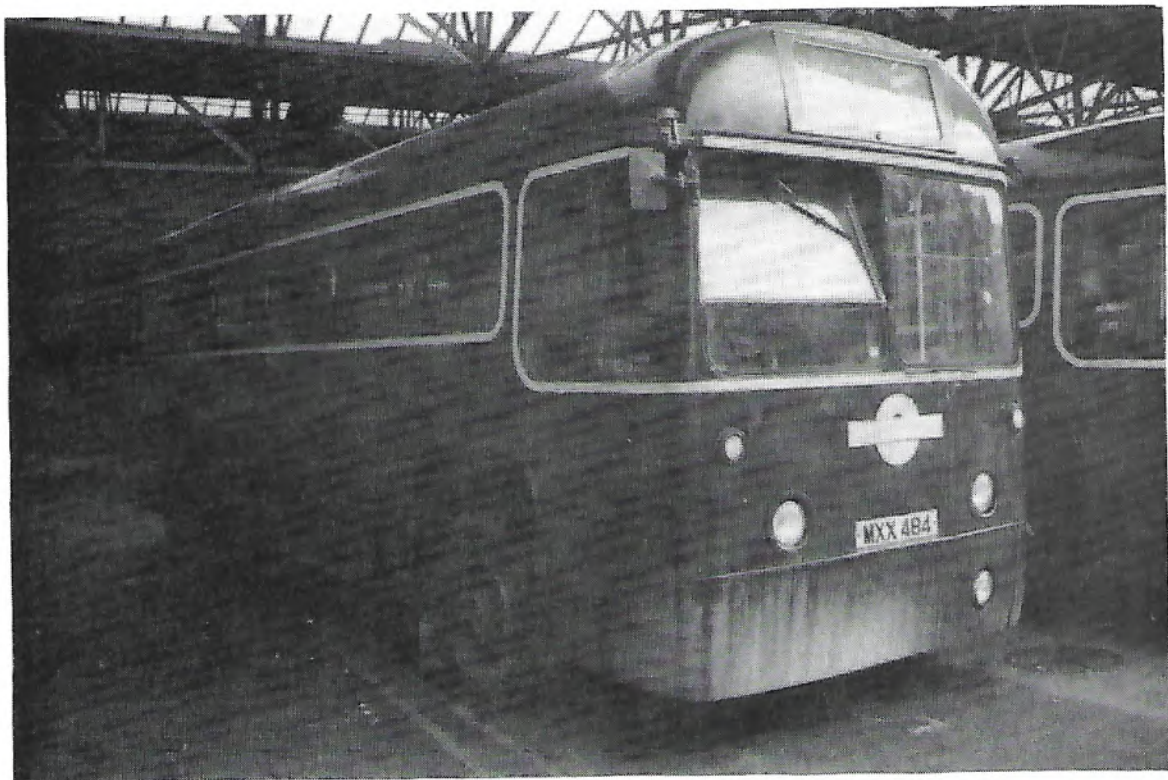
At the central area garages, we normally managed to get round behind the parked buses collecting our precious numbers, but now and again were thwarted. Leyton had a fearsome inspector on duty who had only to glimpse a distant spotter to angrily cast doubts on their



Roy Adams and wife Joan are pictured with the pride of their fleet, RTW29, at the Dean Forest Railway event, where this superb vehicle took the Best of Day trophy. (Photo c/o Roy Adams)



It was just like the good old days in Esher High Street on October 29, where crew-operated RF433 in the hands of John Hinson is seen passing RF518, the latter putting in a very rare passenger-carrying appearance (Photo Colin Sheppard)



An appropriate visitor to the K.O.D. event was RF507, last seen at the 1985 Open Day, and the very last red RF to run on a scheduled LT service in March 1979 (Photo: Mike Nash)



Bill Cottrell receives his award from Bus of Yesteryear organiser David Boshier in recognition of his outstanding contribution to bus preservation over a 30 year period. What would we do without you, Bill? (Photo: Graham Lunn)



Heading for preservation? LT's first production Leyland National, LS7, has been rallied by Westlink during 1995 and is pictured in July at Southampton rally. It is one of only a handful fitted with the dual-purpose interior (Photo: Mike Nash)



Recent recruit Peter Simmonds owns RM642 and also a steadily improving DMS132, one of very few early Fleetlines to survive, identifiable by the narrow headlamp spacing. (Photo: Peter Simmonds)



Whilst most members were enjoying the sunshine at either Staines or Canvey Island, Paul Morris, Andy Baxter and your editor chose to attend Kidderminster, where former RP71 was in service and proved to be tight and rattle-free on the move. It is hoped that one of the few surviving RPs can be secured for Cobham in the future. (Photo Mike Nash)



Our leaf sweeping team, John Greene and Simon Douglas-Lane, need help from members this winter in the constant battle to keep the museum grounds tidy. When not in charge of brooms, the infamous duo are most likely to be seen aboard their splendid Greene-Lane RT3491, which does so much excellent work for Cobham each season. (Photo: Mike Nash)

parentage; similarly Edmonton trolleybus depot in Tramway Avenue possessed its own Hitler. Stockwell was most impressive and its RTLs seemed almost lost in the vast interior. Tottenham garage, I recall had a green 'Q' type bus in the entrance on one visit and someone may be able to shed some light on this.

We not only tried to get to as many garages as we could, but to wherever flocks of buses were known to gather, watering holes such as Aldgate, Stratford Broadway, Golders Green and Holloway; and 'up town' venues eg. Marble Arch and Hyde Park Corner. We did not make that many forays across the water to 'Sarf London', although I can recall a journey through the docks with large ships almost within touching distance of our RT – and a trip across on one of the old Woolwich ferries, an ancient vessel with two tall, thin funnels amidships. You could go below and watch the engines at work as an added attraction.

Golders Green encapsulated the LT scene at that time; RT and RF type buses arriving at and leaving the bus station, trolleybuses going up and down the adjacent Finchley Road and pre-war tube stock crossing overhead on the Northern Line.

Talking of the Underground brings to mind a few journeys made on the Metropolitan Line from Kings Cross to Moorgate. Waiting on the platform, we were sometimes lucky enough to encounter a train of antique compartment stock hauled by one of the electric locos used on the Rickmansworth line. It would come roaring and clanking out of the tunnel like an iron dinosaur, a splendid anachronism in maroon livery lined out in gold and bearing the name 'Michael Faraday' or 'Thomas Lord' or some other worthy.

At the Nag's Head, Holloway, the trolleybus ruled. There were hordes of them. A forest of poles around the junction supported a spaghetti Bolognese of overhead wiring, which trembled constantly as the trolleybuses negotiated the complex crossovers and glided down to the City, up towards Manor House, or to their local depot in Pemberton Gardens. Even RTs seemed to be trespassers in this area dominated by the silent six-wheelers.

Stratford was where I had my first journey on a low-bridge RLH, the upper deck of which was designed for contortionists, or the seven dwarfs. The route (178) at that time had the dubious honour of being London's smelliest, passing a large number of factories emitting a wide range of unpalatable aromas.

Up in town we always enjoyed our spotting. There were so many routes in the busiest locations, buses often nose to tail as far as you could see going to all manner of exotic destinations (like Hornsey or Neasden!). The West End's exciting atmosphere and the famous and historic locations always gave the buses that bit of extra glamour. My impressions were that different members of the RT family predominated at some locations; Hyde Park Corner seemed mainly RT territory, the area around Victoria Embankment was an RTL stronghold, whilst the converging streets at the Bank were the domain of the RTWs. RMs were new on the scene and we occasionally spotted the four prototypes including our friend RM3, in its then guise as RML3 running on route 8.

I had the impression that drivers liked to give their buses plenty of 'wellie' in town whenever the opportunity arose, perhaps to make up time lost in traffic jams – or to make up for the frustration of being stuck in amongst the Austin Somersets, Ford Prefects and Hillman Minx's! As for conductors, there were some amateur comedians amongst them and by sitting on the lengthways seats at the rear of the bus you could get a free show listening to the banter.

Fortunately some conductors on Routemasters continue to uphold this tradition.

In conclusion, I hope I have managed to get across a little of the flavour of London Transport in the late fifties. These were my own recollections without any research, so if I have made any factual errors – blame it on the ageing process! □

STRAIGHTEN IT UP

by one of Dr Spänner's apprentices

It was mentioned and is generally agreed, that if the centre bar of the AEC radiator is bent, (quite easily done), then the whole effect of the front of the bus is altered. Fortunately, spares for this important part are available or at the extreme, straightening is quite feasible on the bench providing that care is taken. The means of replacement is fairly straightforward if you know how but for those doing it for the first time it can involve a lot of wholly unnecessary work. Attempting to straighten the bar in situ can very easily end up with a hole in the back of the radiator but will still prove unsatisfactory as the wire grills will not be brought forward.

The first wise move is to drain the radiator but if the drain cock cannot be opened from the big square headed plug, then it is best to leave this until a little later. To cover that now however; when the grills are off, the castellated nut securing the taper is visible through the bottom radiator casting and after removing any split pin this can be undone, a couple of turns and a gentle but sharp crack on the end of the plug should be sufficient to release the taper and allow the radiator to be drained into a suitably sized container. A cheap 7 gallon plastic expansion tank from the local cheap DIY outlet is an ideal size and is also ideal for sump draining.

After working the taper back and forth a few times to loosen it, nip up the nut again and re-split pin. Remove the 2 large captive bolts securing the side panel to the engine and make sure that the bonnet cover has adequate spring tension to stop it dropping on your head, or chock it up with a piece of wood for safety.

There are 3, ¼" Whitworth nuts to remove, one is in the centre of the bottom radiator casting just below the bottom tank and two can be found protruding from plates at the back of the radiator core, one just below the fan and one carefully located in a position difficult to get at between the radiator matrix and the fan blades themselves. All will probably appreciate a generous dose of WD40 the day before and in

accordance with a certain law, familiar to all bus owners, the one in front of the fan is the one that, after initial loosening, will not come off with the fingers but requires innumerable movements of the spanner at one-sixth turns. A flat ring spanner is ideal, a normal cranked ring spanner fouls the fan blades and an open ended of course drops off at every movement, most of which are made blind.

When the three nuts and lock washers are off carefully remove the triangular LT plate, remembering that any sudden or hard movement will crack off some of the vitreous enamel. Hide the plate away from collectors! Behind the plate will be found two slotted head countersunk $\frac{1}{4}$ " BSW set screws. These have a sheradised finish and are screwed into the aluminium of the header tank, have probably not been removed for many years and electrolytic corrosion is going to make sure that you are not going to remove them now, no matter how many coats of WD40 you try to get in. Very carefully try to centre punch the centre of the slot, the slot itself will at least ensure that your are right in one direction and the eye should be sufficiently accurate for the other but do not deepen the punch until you are confident that you are as near central as you are going to get. Drill through to $\frac{5}{8}$ " depth from the surface with a $\frac{3}{32}$ " drill which fits nicely into the screwdriver slot, preferably with a hand drill, until you have a sound hole, making minor adjustments to the position by drilling off-set towards the centre and then finish off to a $\frac{5}{8}$ " depth with an electric drill if preferred. An electric drill is too unwieldy to start a nice straight hole and you need to get the hole position right before attacking it with such a weapon. Once the hole is completed to a depth of $\frac{3}{32}$ " drill out to $\frac{5}{8}$ " deep using a No.6 drill; an electric drill will probably be preferable for this as the sheradised steel bolt is quite tough. In theory at this point the countersunk head will now drop off but if it does not, a $\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter drill will quickly remove them, three in the bar, from its constraints. Do one at a time and try to leave a little of the bolt projecting until later.

The three nuts removed earlier secure two Z shaped $\frac{1}{4}$ " studs and at the bottom one straight stud. The bar has to be wiggled out, first

pulled forward enough to release the bottom stud and then moved towards to the off-side to release the Z shape studs. Remove studs and instal in the replacement bar or straighten the old bar on the bench, remembering that the off-set of the Z studs is towards the nearside of the vehicle. Remove the four $\frac{1}{4}$ " BSF bolts securing the number plate to the grill, again, these will benefit from a liberal dose of WD40, and the six (three on each side) $\frac{5}{16}$ " bolts, washers and lock washers that secure the two halves of the wire grill. To do it properly you should remove the lower half of the radiator casting, a small section that is only around 6" deep and which is secured by four $\frac{3}{8}$ " studs accessible from underneath, although a socket with a universal joint will be necessary for one on each side. To remove the casting however you will be lucky, as electrolytic corrosion will have almost certainly virtually welded the studs to the casting and the force required to break the joint may well damage the thin walls of the casting itself. The only real advantage is the ability to clean off more easily all the layers of paint and surface corrosion.

Assuming that you leave well alone and leave the bottom section on, the two halves of the radiator grill can be wangled out, they fit into slots at the side, the bottom and partially to the top and thus their lengths need to be reduced slightly by springing them forward and then moving them sideways. If they are already bent they will probably drop out in any event. Liberal tapping with a wooden mallet on a flat surface (paving slabs or similar) on both sides, reversing several times, will return these brass meshes to as flat a surface as you are ever likely to achieve and following a good scrub and a dry, they can be painted with a nice new coat of black gloss. Whilst the drying is in hand, return to the radiator, now looking very much like an RTL, and take the opportunity to wash out the matrix and get out the emery parer and wet and dry, removing all that paint around the edges in preparation for a final polish with wire wool. Now give your attention to the pressed steel vertical bar fitted between top and bottom radiator tanks, which is probably bent in the same way your centre bar was and is not so easily straightened, as it is perforated with three large holes,

making it extremely weak in these positions. If you cannot get it completely straight, pull it forward so that it is proud of the straight line, as it should not be left behind the vertical under any circumstances.

When everything is nice and dry, attack all the sections behind the grill with a quick coat of matt black paint, including lightly brushing over the radiator matrix, making sure you give a good coating to the vertical bar which is very exposed and rusts easily. A coat of Hammerite here would be preferable but I would not advocate trying to put Hammerite on the radiator matrix.

When all is dry, start by returning the grill sections to the radiator. They will need to be partially sprung in on the vertical first, and then moved over sideways to get them into the vertical slot, do not put any of the screws in until you have got it in position and making sure that all three holes line, up as you will probably find that it is half in and half out of the slots and impossible to move until the bolts have been removed again. Take your bar, complete with studs and feed it through the half moon slots in the grill frame which cover the holes in the vertical bar behind; move it across towards the nearside and engage the bottom straight stud into the hole in the bottom casting. Avoid the temptation to leave the bottom stud off and feed it in later, even though this appears to be an easier way of installing the bar as it is in fact impossible to put the stud in from the inside out. At this point it would be helpful to have the assistance of one other, as it is possible for the studs to push the plates off the back of the radiator, rather than slide neatly through the holes, they are not impossible to put back on when this happens but not easy either. Check the alignment of the top of the V bar with the corresponding share of the radiator and adjust as necessary by pulling the bar out enough to put a mole grip on the Z studs to move the bar up or down, push fully home and secure the three nuts onto the studs, not forgetting washers and lock washers, but **DO NOT OVER TIGHTEN**, do the nuts up only to when you have pulled the bar into a straight line. Excess tightening will only bend the bar, putting you back to square one. The grill panels will now be

sandwiched between the aluminium vertical bar and the steel bar and if you did not straighten the steel bar, the panels will simply fall back out of the line, giving the impression that the bar is bent.

In theory, the two countersunk securing screws of the top of the V do not go through into the header tank but if they have been carelessly drilled out in the past, they may well do, anyway, there is not an excess of meat beyond the end of the hole before you are into the water zone. It is for this reason that it was prudent to drain the radiator, as a jet of water and electric drills do not mix particularly well. With the V held in position by the remnants of one bolt, drill out the remainder of the other bolt with a No. 4 drill, which should be just over $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the face of the bar, there should be a further $\frac{1}{4}$ " void beyond that before hitting the aluminium of the header tank itself but put a piece of tape on the drill to make sure that you do not go greater than $\frac{3}{8}$ " in any event. I have made a little hardened steel insert that fits in the hole as an aid to concentric drilling and Bill Cotterel will have this for anyone who needs it.

If you are extremely lucky, drilling out the hole will have removed the remnants of the old bolt and left you with a nice clean thread to in which to put a replacement, but if you are that lucky, you will have already won the lottery and have someone doing this job for you. For the mortals among us, a $\frac{1}{4}$ " BSW tap will need to be put into the hole for a nice new secure fixing. You will need a standard $\frac{3}{4}$ " long countersunk $\frac{1}{4}$ " BSW bolt, but you will probably have to acquire one longer and cut it down. $\frac{3}{4}$ " should be the overall, including the countersunk head. Coat the thread liberally with jointing compound or gloss paint and screw up tight, then drill out the other bolt and replace in the same fashion. Carefully re-fix the LT plate with the top two screws, a tiny soft washer will help to avoid damaging the enamel and see whether the third and bottom hole will actually fit, in many cases the threaded hole in the bar is almost three sixteenth inch lower than the hole in the plate, if you try to put the securing screw in on any angle, you will break the vitreous enamel. Secure, either by drilling and tapping a new 2BA hole or use a zinc or chromium plated raised

head, short countersunk self tapping screw, not more than 3/8", in a new hole drilled in the bar. Do not try to use sheet metal clearances, the hole should be just slightly smaller than the overall size of the screw.

Make sure you remember to put the number plate back on, touch up the various securing screws and washers, remember to check that you turned the radiator drain off again and refill with coolant. Check that you have not left that ring spanner on one of the nuts between the radiator and the fan, put the side panel back on and check that all is well.

Except for waiting for paint to dry this job does not need to take much longer than this article took to read and the enhancement to the visual affect makes it well worth the effort. □

RF43 R.I.P.

Some of our more senior members may recall the above vehicle attending events in the early Eighties. Indeed it collected 1st prize at the Chiswick rally in 1983. Built in December 1951, RF43 passed away in March 1995, the victim of an arson attack.

She was a very good vehicle and fast too and I miss her a great deal having had some great times on London to Brighton runs, at North Weald and two days on location for the film 'Top Secret' in which RFs 113,197,308 and 673 were also used.

I owned the vehicle with Mr Neil Barber and we travelled well over 16,000 miles of good AEC motoring. She was always a lovely coach to drive and a credit to her owners.

Vic Chivers

STILL WANTED: Photos and any information on RF41.

Also RF43. Ring Vic Chivers on 01279 309. AEC Forever!

LETTERS

From Roger Stagg

No-one could dispute that since the erection of the new stores, permitting the formation of areas to allow more sensible working spaces, that the situation for restoration at Cobham has been up-graded manifold. However, in certain respects we appear to continue to be our own worst enemies in regard to working in a degree of mess, which is detrimental to the long term aim of the highest level of restoration in the minimum time and at minimum cost.

One only has to look inside the 9T9, the RT and the STL to see that virtually every dismantled part gets stored inside and then needs to be moved continuously as the restoration process continues. In the long term this can only end up by promoting more damage to the interior parts and the consequent misplacement and indeed loss of bits and pieces; witness the disappearing radiator securing bracket of the 10T10, despite the restricted amount of work that was carried out on it.

There is no doubt that lack of storage space is the problem; in these respects, lack of storage space not of the Trust's accumulation of spare parts, but of the actual fixtures and fitments of the individual vehicles whilst they are undergoing restoration. Logically, the only place to store the parts and keep them together is inside the body of the vehicles. It would be imprudent to consider placing them in the main stores unless we had 20 times the area that we have at the present time and even so, this could lead to them being utilised elsewhere.

We need to be able to get vehicles stripped of all unnecessary parts to give full and free access for restoration and in cases like the STL, that also means all of the seats and seat frames as well as the mechanical parts that have by necessity been removed for refurbishment before replacement.

Planning permissions and costs must dictate that further buildings

for specific storage are unlikely to materialise at Cobham but I raise the question as to whether we should not be seriously considering storage facilities that can be obtained cheaply, are secure and do not require planning permission. In this respect we have two alternatives, (A) vehicle bodies and (B) steel sea containers. Lorry bodies would not be the preferable item as many now need to be maintained on their chassis for stability, although there are certain types of lorry body that could be wholly suitable. Steel containers are by far the best option as they take years to rot away even without maintenance, are extremely secure and are relatively cheap. A 20 ft container, divided in the centre could provide adequate storage for two vehicles, with a clean and dirty end for interior and mechanical components respectively; similarly a racked out container could probably provide an adequate store for all the small components currently beneath the canteen and could open up the possibility of a better usage for the whole end of the building.

Teston Road, Offham, Maidstone, Kent ME19 5NE

From D J Ehlert

Thank you for your letter containing my Membership Card, the Member's Details form and the magazine no 9.

The magazine is magnificent. It is a good mixture of pictures and interesting articles, and very well produced.

I have been visiting the Cobham Museum for about ten years now, and I was pleased to see the great change at the museum this April (1995). It is always a friendly and informal atmosphere there. A contribution of funds and help from the public will help to ensure that the real buses are housed and kept in good condition for us and future generations to enjoy.

I hope the museum thrives and I am pleased to be a member.

Queenhill Road, Selsdon, S Croydon, Surrey CR2 8DQ

KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE

ROGER WEST



Probably the only Committee member who knows nothing about buses but likes to play with them. RF486 was a surprise 40th birthday present from my wife, Pam, and much to her surprise (and the neighbours' disgust) I managed to park it in the front garden while we painted it (strange how all our friends disappeared for a time). I discovered later that not everybody approved of me using a roller instead of a brush – you learn as you go on.

During the week I sell life insurance and pensions on behalf of Peter Goddard and Company, the Trust's accountants. When not at the Museum I am often found at the wheel of my bubble car which goes at about the same speed as the bus but uses less fuel.

As the Committee members come to terms with a new word in their vocabulary – Director – I can see the need to cut down some more trees to cope with an amazing amount of paperwork and being a champion of women at Cobham (I think that's what she told me to say) I wonder if some gorgeous female would like to earn a few brownie points by organising me? Answers on a postcard please! □

YOUR MUSEUM NEEDS YOU!

The continuing success of the Trust at Cobham means that with growth there is more to do. The five display days for a start: they have been, apart from the first one, a great success, and the Bank Holiday day in particular was memorable because families came and not just our faithful bus enthusiasts, who of course enjoyed the 22nd October instead. The mixture of new people coming to see us at Cobham is to be welcomed and encouraged.

The present delegation of work for the Committee took place when we had a membership of 99. It is now over 350 and as I said above, growth means more work. More people are coming down, wives are getting involved on sub committees and with the Shop to make the place less unuser friendly to the fair sex and to the unfair sex too for that matter!

The Committee has thought at great length about how to make the membership of the new 200+ more attractive in a practical way. Many of our vehicles appear at more and more events as they take to the road after restoration. *These vehicles need cleaning inside and out and throughout the year.* So why not adopt a bus with a couple of pals of either sex and take that bus under your wing and be responsible for its internal and external appearance – this has one great advantage – it frees the technical and specialist workers to carry on with the restoration work, knowing that our running vehicles will always look their best whether out on the road or static in the museum for our increasing number of visitors to admire.

So if you've joined there is plenty to do at Cobham, and we'd love to see more of you: as you will read elsewhere in this Magazine, the transfer of assets to the Trust is upon us and so it really is a case of *our membership working on our buses for our organisation: it's ours* to make of it what we can. See Peter or myself to talk about which vehicle(s) you would like to adopt!

Simon Douglas Lane

25 YEARS AGO

From our newsletters

Mid-August 1970

The latest news on STL2108 near Paris is that the owner would like £100 for it, the deadline being the end of the year when the property is turned over to the site developers.

Dave Hurley is liaising with the Dutch motor museum at Leidschendam, Holland on the restoration of their STL441 and their latest acquisition RTL139 . . .

Mid-September 1970: Vehicle News

It is reported that RTW48 has been acquired from a Northern dealer for preservation. The Kingsbury yard, home of RTL1323, RTW75, T448 and RF10 for up to four years, was vacated by all but the latter by last week-end. T448 was moved under its own power for the first time. Last minute air-leaks delayed the departure of private hire RF10.

The Commercial Motor Show is currently on and includes the first of the Fleetlines, DMS1 & 2, and a London Country Swift.

Late-October 1970

The LBPG Trophy, presented each year by the Committee 'in furtherance of London bus preservation' has this year been awarded to Tim Nicholson, for his tremendous work in starting LT1059 after it had lain idle in the garden for 22 years, and, if that were not enough, his work in reconstructing the engine of CR14.

Vehicle News

TD95 now has a safe entrance step, RT1173 is no longer aluminium-coloured but now sports undercoat. RTL453 has a reconstructed back-

end, RTW467 interior renovation is forging ahead. STL2093 has recently acquired the flared end to its wings, fitted by a gentleman now retired who used to do just that at CS many moons past; CR14 seats are out and being retrimmed, RT1431 has received another engine and lost its characteristic knock; the chassis of burnt-out RTL305 is being rebuilt and I hear the engine of B214 is being run-in in a boat in Hong Kong harbour! Slowly but surely Interstation C111 is being stripped and primed, and TD130 is likely to be repainted this winter.

The chassis and cab of LT809 has been located near London, in fairly good and complete condition and negotiations are in hand for its acquisition.

Our Chairman, Prince Marshall, has become the 'proud' owner of an ex-London Public 4-ton Dennis open-top, open-staircase double decker. There is a snag of course, the body and chassis are separated by several miles! The bus is XX9591 dating from January 1925, bears body number 10837 and became D61 in the General fleet. The vehicle has formed part of a shed for many years and is in structurally very sound order for its years although the staircase has much rot. The fare-board and seats were still in situ, even the interior bulbs – which still worked . . .

A Barton RTL has been earmarked for preservation, in Barton livery.

Materials, etc

The highly successful season has enabled us to invest in stock to ensure the future well-being of member vehicles. Included is a further quantity of the old-style London Transport and Green Line fleetnames, along with additional old-style gold fleetletters and numbers, bullseyes etc. Another 'find' was the original art-work for an Underground railway map . . . dated as the latter half of 1906. With the co-operation of the manufacturer, a few samples in half-size have been made, in vitreous enamel as originally, and very fine they look. □

NEWS FROM THE ROUTEMASTER HERITAGE TRUST

Mike Clarke

Grab your diary and make a note for Sunday June 23rd 1996. The Routemaster Heritage Trust have hired the testing tracks and small road system at the Transport and Road Research Laboratory at Crowthorne, Nr Bracknell, Berkshire, and are staging 'Classic Auto-Motion'

This will be an event with a difference. Apart from presenting a unique opportunity to visit a very unusual venue, features will include running track displays of Classic Buses as well as other forms of commercial and road passenger transport, recreating road scenes from the 50s, 60s and 70s. The track system will give excellent photographic opportunities.

The laboratory's 'small road system' will host a new event for the Trust in the form of 'The Preserved Bus "DRIVER OF THE YEAR" competition', comprising a series of driving manoeuvres and road skills. Judges who are qualified PCV instructors will be positioned around the course which consists of a series of road junctions – traffic lights – pedestrian crossing – hill start areas and roundabout, and will award points against a predetermined score sheet. There will be two major categories, those drivers with full PCV licence and those who drive either on 'Grandfather rights' or on a Car licence. Allowances on the points system will be made for those driving manual gearboxes as opposed to those using Pre-select or automatic. Prizes will be given for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in both of the two categories. In each case, 1st prize will be £100, 2nd £50 and 3rd £25 plus trophies.

Visitors will be able to visit the various displays and watch the drivers' competition by using the internal vintage bus service, and since the event will not go on to the public highway the opportunity may arise to ride on some vehicles which do not normally carry passengers these days.

For those travelling by train to the event a free bus service will operate between Bracknell rail and bus station and the site. Ample free

car parking will be available on site which will be signposted from the A322 Bracknell to Bagshot road.

With a combination of static displays and running road scenes of classic buses and other forms of vintage road transport – along with Vintage bus rides, Go Kart track, transport bazaar and trade stands already planned plus other items in the pipeline, “Classic Auto-Motion” will be an event not to be missed. All profits will go to the Routemaster Heritage Trust’s funds. The Trust is a registered charity (No1027892).

Applications are invited from those willing to act as marshalls on the day or who may wish to exhibit a classic bus or other vehicle or take part in the preserved bus driver competition, as well as those wishing to take part in the transport bazaar stands. For further information or application forms please contact

For Cars/Commercials & Trade stands: Mike Clarke, RHT Chairman,
Lilibrooke Crescent, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 3XQ. Tel/Fax
01628 691 up to 9pm or

Bill Ackroyd, RHT Treasurer, Hawthorn Road, Send Marsh, Ripley,
Surrey, GU23 6LH Tel 0483 060 up to 9pm.

For Buses: Maurice Dogett, Purley Bury Avenue, Purley, Surrey,
CR8 1JF. Tel 0181 4359 up to 9pm

"CLASSIC AUTO-MOTION" SUNDAY 23RD JUNE 1996

RT/RF REGISTER RUNNING DAY STAINES – October 8th 1995

This event had been plagued throughout the previous few months by speculation as to whether or not it was going to take place, if you are a member of the register it was never that unclear, however due to the announcements made earlier in the year about lack of support being shown by bus owners (an unusual situation for a Register event) the grapevine started to spread ill-founded rumours. The situation may not have been helped by the later announcement that Peter Gomm was to retire as Editor and that the Register may close by the end of 1995. (A conclusion has been reached on this matter, the Register will continue to operate with John Gray as Editor for the coming year). In fact all that had happened was that the planned nocturnal services were cut and the publicity was cut back. Then at almost the eleventh hour it was found that the local council had advised that Trade stalls would not be permitted on the Riverside Car Park area. Despite these adversities the organisers were always determined that this would be an enjoyable day for those taking part.

It was with this background in mind that on a fine, bright Sunday morning my colleague Trevor and I set off from Maidenhead in RF643 for the short run to Staines. We had been scheduled for an afternoon duty “in service” on the 466 Staines – Virginia Water Station route and Trevor had eagerly volunteered (foolish fad) to act as my conductor.

Our fears were raised as we drove into Staines one-way system to find only a small clutch of photographers, sited near the Bus station, as we drove round to the Riverside car park, our meeting point for the day. As the car park came into sight things appeared to go from bad to worse, there were more cars than buses on site, and only a relatively small number of buses had arrived by the duly appointed start time. However a fair number of buses were already out at Knowle Green preparing to start the scheduled services and I suddenly found that I was given an “extra duty” having been requested to act as Conductor

on Peter Gomm's duty out to Datchet. It was rumoured that John Gray had set the timetables for the day, and looking at them we calculated that he must have used a Turbo-charged Jaguar at around 2am in order to work out the schedules.

Appearances and first impressions can be deceptive – and so it was in this case. The weather went from bright to very warm, the public turned out in reasonable numbers, and the planned services all ran, very easily, to schedule except one who ended up around 15 minutes behind, allegedly because he made an unscheduled stop at a certain fast food store, in this case not fast enough. The only down side was that programmes were sold out early in the day, if you can call a sell-out a down side.

Those who had volunteered their buses and their time all appeared to enjoy themselves as did those who rode the services, although if Holloway Sanatorium had still been open I can think of one "customer" who would have been dropped off there by Trevor and I.

Vehicles taking part either static or on service included, RMC1476, GS1/62, RLH23/48, RF28/280/366/433/453/517/518/627/643, RT113/1206/1499, RP21 and XF1; apologies to those I may have missed. Routes covered were 117, 216, 224, 436, 460 and 466.

Despite our early misgivings it was an excellent day which we thoroughly enjoyed. Those who chose not to go, possibly because of the reports circulated earlier in the year, missed a well organised, friendly event.

Mike Clarke



DR. SPANNER'S SURGERY

Continuing on from the subject of lubrication in the last magazine, in this issue we consider the function of the Automatic Chassis Lubricator (ACL). The system described is applicable to the RT and RF families and early versions of the DMS. It consists of a supply tank, the lubricator (pump) and the piping that fans out to 24 points on the chassis. The system is activated by application of the brake pedal, so it takes 24 brake applications to feed each point with a drop of oil. The disadvantage of this on a preserved vehicle is that the brakes are not operated as frequently as in service conditions for which the system was designed. Contrast a bus in service, stopping every 200 yards and creeping along in heavy traffic, to a preserved bus trundling up the motorway, perhaps covering a hundred miles before applying the brakes. Should this situation concern us? We should first look at the areas the ACL serves.

TABLE OF POINTS SERVED

Front and rear spring shackles	12
Front and rear brake chambers	4
Hand brake cross shaft	1
Hand brake swing lever	2
Pedal shaft	1
Gear selector swing lever	2
Lubricator cylinder	1
Air reservoir valve rocker	1
Total	24

From the above we can see that the areas constantly working on long motorway trips are the spring shackles. So what should we do about the apparent lack of lubrication? The amount of oil supplied can be regulated, but in my experience, given that the lubricator is working properly, it is still sufficient. Look for a bead of oil at the points served,

and if present, leave well enough alone. However, if you feel there is not sufficient oil, for example, the springs are creaking and groaning, the quantity can be increased. Look for a single square headed screw and slacken the locknut. Screwing in will decrease the supply and screwing out, 2 to 3 turns, will increase the supply, but to ALL points.

Maintenance

Obviously, the oil level in the supply tank will need to be monitored and topped up with engine oil. Under the bus, check if the points detailed earlier show sign of oil. If some are dry look for areas of clean oil where there should be none and this may show a split pipe. Although pipes can be repaired they are routed together and locating a fault amongst a pipe loom and repairing it is a lot of work. If there are no signs of leaks it is possible that an element within the pump has failed. A quick-fix solution is to replace the lubricator pipe with a grease nipple (check the compatibility of the threads) and apply grease.

Due to the small amount of oil involved with each brake application it can be difficult to identify problem areas. It gets very boring sitting in the cab constantly applying the brake pedal and then checking for signs of oil. Help is at hand . . . in the next issue . . . the ACME ACL priming machine, how to build one or perhaps, where to borrow one!

Final thought

Every year, around March, there are one or two inquiries for replacement engines, or inquiries for advice on block stitching, due to frost damage. Don't forget, if you drain your radiator rather than put in antifreeze, also drain the block. It is probable, even if totally drained, pockets of water remain in the water pump, or trapped by sediment. So even if you think you have totally drained your engine add back a couple of gallons of 50/50 antifreeze mix. □

THE SAGA OF THE BEAST

John (Bimbo) Broadhurst

It was on a recent visit to Cobham to tell them I couldn't come (I have been helping – or hindering – Peter Plummer and Brian Down to construct or fabricate some kind of structure at the back of a double decker, why, I didn't know, because I was never any good with Meccano as a lad!, when someone showed me a photo of their bus at a rally in Luton. 'That's my vehicle', I said. 'No it's not, it's mine', said Pam West. 'No it isn't, I bought it after the rally.' 'We still have it', said Pam. No, I have it, and I've got a problem with the rear hub, offside of course (the hub, not me!)

Of course, Pam was quite right, and so was I (never argue with a woman!) You see – or rather you couldn't see my coach, or at least you could see the side light and part of the windscreen in the photo as it was parked alongside Pam's vehicle.

Yes, I bought the Chiltern Queens' Reliance Plaxton bodied coach AJH241A, chassis no. 4MU 3RA 4261 (include that for the technical ones among you. Originally registered as VBW581 which was transferred to another Chiltern Queens coach).

On the journey from Bedford where I purchased the 'Queen Mary' (a nickname given to the beast even before it was delivered to Chiltern Queens as it was built to the newly authorised length of 36 feet), I had problems. I knew before I purchased the beast that it had indigestion for it had an oil leak from its internal combustion engine. So, topped up with the said lubrication, it headed for its new home. As we (the coach and myself) approached South Mimms Services, the beast decided to throw a tantrum. It appeared to be on the point of seizure! Right in the middle of the roundabout at traffic lights on red. (Have you noticed how traffic builds up behind you when you can't move?) As if by magic, from out of nowhere (there's never one around when you want one!) came two police officers. The immortal words issued forth: you can't park there.

Er, it won't move.

It'll have to b****y well move.

As the prospects of 'arrest' loomed before me, I tried the starter. It fired, so I got it to the side of the road and checked the oil level. Where had it all gone? (they do say it is a good preservative!) So, tanked up with a couple of gallons of oil from some friendly gypsies (waste oil of course!) at my cost, we limped into the service area. Yes, the recovery people would let me park up till I could arrange something – at a cost of £70 per week! It's amazing how this sort of information galvanizes you into action!

I sobbed out my story to a young man who was on the pumps filling his coach with diesel (in the tank, that is). This young man with an eye for business said he could help out. So start up time again and round to his yard just behind the Services.

Handy! His father, who at one time worked for LT and had some coaches on school contract, promised to give the Beast a few tablets and rest, and perhaps it would be well enough to travel in a few weeks time to its new home (which at the time happened to be a grass verge on a B-class road. Why do the council put up notices about not parking on grass verges – surely its safer than parking on the road?)

The Beast was collected and resumed the journey. However, seven miles more from said grass verge, it decided to have another tantrum. (Is it *me* the Beast doesn't like, or what?) Perhaps it had a stone in its shoe. At first, I thought someone had left a parrot in the back – or maybe it was a starling. I just couldn't define the screech! As it was intermittent, I carried on. So did the screech! Perhaps it was a screech owl? If only!

It was definitely coming from the rear end, and on the offside. Now those of you who are acquainted with the Reliance chassis will by now have put two and two together and come up with the correct answer – whereas I thought – a binding brake? Especially as the area of the rear off-side hub was rather hot!

The thing wouldn't cool down with the ambient temperature in the region of eighty degrees (Centigrade or Fahrenheit – please yourself!). So after some period of waiting in which time a few small bottles of

water were thrown at the thing in a forlorn hope that matters might improve – I decided to press on home. Oh, ye of good faith!

That's why the Beast was unable to go to the 40th anniversary of Chiltern Queens on 24th September. What a shame!

So I went on my own without the Beast, which is now in bed at a pig farm, (serve it right!) with a poorly offside hub. I'll let you know how it gets on – after major surgery and convalescence.

'If I had a wife she would have divorced me by now – but then I haven't – only the Beast. □

John's continuing saga with the 'Beast' will be covered next issue.

VEHICLE NEWS

Peter Plummer

September to November 1995

P3

A start was made in early September to strip off damaged panels on the offside of the vehicle and new panels have been cut and prepared ready for fitting.

Unfortunately, much of the lower timber pillar work was split or missing but this has now been rectified by Brian Down and myself. The prolonged strip-down period has provided the opportunity for underbody cleaning and painting by Ken Wade, Alan Davidson, Malcolm Lewis and myself

Colin Prince cleaned and painted the fuel tank and Paul Morris has fitted a new tank gauge and float. Interior work and electrical problems have been dealt with by Mike Nash, Paul Morris and Andy Baxter, who also stripped the offside rear wheel hub and effected repairs.

RT2775

The rear underbody was painted by Malcolm Lewis, Ken

Wade, Alan Davidson, John Bedford and new volunteer Richard Hussey, after thorough preparation by John Broadhurst. Ian Barrett fabricated a new steel back rail to platform corner, which was fitted together with all three platform supports by myself in late September.

Platform timbers for flooring and bracing were cut and fitted by Brian Down and me and at the time of writing, half the platform is permanently in position. Lower saloon flooring cut by Brian Down was fitted by Andy Baxter and me. Finally, a new ticket box panel has been fitted, with assistance by Alan Davidson.

STL2377 The cleaned and repainted fuel tank was refitted by 'Blackie' Blackburn on 9th September. The rear axle was removed the following week by Andy Baxter, Ron and Gavin Cotton. This has now been stripped, cleaned and inspected by Bill Cottrell and was recently painted in primer by Richard Hussey who has also primed the rear springs.

T448 Of the two nearside rear quarter panels specially cut and rolled in steel, one was fitted after reworking but the lower corner panel has been very problematic due to its typically intricate 1930s shaping. However, the whole nearside of the vehicle was painted in primer by Brian Down and myself in readiness for beading and strapping to be fitted this winter.

702B John Bedford has located some outstanding parts required such as the radiator chrome strip but the 'working rubber' component for the horn push in the centre of the steering wheel remains elusive. Does anyone know of an organisation which can mould a 'one-off' rubber component from a pattern? Please write to your chairman if you have any ideas.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MAGAZINE

Please send all magazine contributions and advertisements to the Editor. In order to make the most effective use of new typesetting technology, it would be much appreciated if manuscripts were typed, although this is not essential and all contributions are, of course, welcome. Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor and Committee. When contacting the Committee, please enclose an SAE if a reply is required.

Rear cover: TD95 looked magnificent at November's Reading Buses event, where it took the honours, thanks to a thorough polish carried out on site by Hugh Harland (photo: Mike Nash)

